



United Community & Family Services

A Legacy of Caring since 1877

34 East Town Street
Norwich, Connecticut 06360-2326

telephone (860) 889-2376
fax (860) 889-3450
www.ucfs.org

**Testimony of Nancy Cowser, Vice President of Planning
United Community & Family Services**

in opposition to

**Sections 3-8 of H.B. No. 6846 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS.**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Nancy Cowser and I am Vice President of Planning for United Community & Family Services, Inc. (UCFS) in Norwich. I am offering the following testimony in opposition to Sections 3-8 of HB6846 which would reduce the income eligibility for adults covered under HUSKY A to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, impacting over 34,000 people.

UCFS is a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-alike, providing comprehensive medical, women's health, dental and behavioral health services to low-income residents of Eastern CT. Our primary target population is the uninsured and publicly insured residents of our service area. In calendar year 2014, we provided 112,000 visits to 16,300 clients, 66% of whom were on Medicaid. We have undergone explosive growth since 2006, more than doubling our visit volume. We provide care to all, regardless of ability to pay, and have actively supported AccessHealthCT, including hosting a storefront in our Norwich Health Center for this past enrollment period.

Our experience with the uninsured and the Affordable Care Act tells us that the majority of our clients who are eliminated from the Medicaid program will NOT seek ACA policies. Rather, they will again join the ranks of the uninsured, for whom we must provide greatly reduced care at the same time that grants and programs for the uninsured are being eliminated. For those few who do seek ACA policies, they will be faced with high copays and deductibles that will present a barrier to accessing care. Once again, we will be called upon to help clients cover those costs in order to reduce those barriers to accessing care, while facing significant resource constraints to support that care.

Most egregious is the provision to include pregnant women in this transition. This is most troubling in that this same budget eliminates funding for Healthy Start, which is targeted at uninsured pregnant women. The ultimate victims of this policy will be the babies and their mothers who do not receive adequate prenatal care, putting them at risk for poor birth outcomes.

UCFS very conservatively estimates that this provision will cost us at least \$250,000. As an FQHC Look-alike, UCFS does not receive federal grant support. A cut of this size, combined with other cuts contained in the state budget, will lead to the elimination of jobs. This will in turn reduce access to care. Adding to the unemployment rolls and restricting access to care cannot help the state move towards economic recovery and are in direct contradiction to the Administration's goals.



On behalf of our clients, I strongly urge the Human Services Committee to oppose **Sections 3-8 of H.B. No. 6846.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Cowser
Vice President, Planning
UCFS
34 E. Town Street
Norwich, CT 06360
860-822-4161 - Phone
860-889-3450 – Fax
ncowser@ucfs.org

